

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICENATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

MITCHELL COUNTY COURTHOUSE

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Southeast corner, Main and Hersey

CITY, TOWN

Beloit

VICINITY OF

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

No. 1, Keith Sebelius

STATE

Kansas 67420

CODE

20

COUNTY

Mitchell

CODE

123

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT☒ BUILDING(S)☐ STRUCTURE☐ SITE☐ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

☒ PUBLIC☐ PRIVATE☐ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS☐ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED☐ UNOCCUPIED☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

☒ YES: RESTRICTED☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED☐ NO

PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE☐ MUSEUM☐ COMMERCIAL☐ PARK☐ EDUCATIONAL☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☐ ENTERTAINMENT☐ RELIGIOUS☒ GOVERNMENT☐ SCIENTIFIC☐ INDUSTRIAL☐ TRANSPORTATION☐ MILITARY☐ OTHER:**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Mitchell County

STREET & NUMBER

Mitchell County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Beloit

VICINITY OF

STATE

Kansas

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. ☒ Register of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

Mitchell County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Beloit

STATE

Kansas 67420

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Historic Sites Survey

DATE

1971

☐ FEDERAL ☒ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Kansas State Historical Society

CITY, TOWN

Topeka

STATE

Kansas

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

___EXCELLENT
X_GOOD
___FAIR

___DETERIORATED
___RUINS
___UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

___UNALTERED
X_ALTERED

CHECK ONE

X_ORIGINAL SITE
___MOVED DATE_____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Mitchell County Courthouse is a large two and one-half story post rock building that was designed in the Richardsonian Romanesque style. Post rock is a type of limestone found in Kansas in an area covering over three million acres, stretching from the Nebraska border near Mahaska almost directly southwest to a few miles north of Dodge City. This stone was extensively used by the early settlers as a substitute for wooden fence posts, which were scarce, costly and not resistant to prairie fires, hence its name. The stone is generally located directly under the topsoil in much of the region; it is uniform in depth, seldom being less than eight or more than twelve inches thick; it is soft enough to shape with a chisel when freshly quarried, and it hardens after being exposed to the air. The stone itself is a creamy-buff color that generally has a brown streaked layer somewhere near the center. This native limestone became the traditional building material in the area.

The Mitchell County Courthouse measures 95 feet on the east and west facades and 75 feet 8 inches on the north and south sides. The courthouse has been trimmed with Warrensburg sandstone and rests on a Cottonwood Falls limestone foundation. The courthouse square, which is densely planted, is located to the east of the main business street in Beloit.

The main facade, which faces west, is dominated by a 110 feet tall square tower. The entrance is protected by a one story porch with a Syrian archway. This arch has been repeated in the flat arch around the actual doorway. The impost blocks have been intricately carved with vegetative forms. The squat pillars which support the two arches are polished Missouri red granite. The inscription, "19-ERECTED-01" has been carved in relief above the archway. A series of small arches are cut out of the stone balustrade above the date. The tower which rises for six stories above the porch is divided by the irregularly spaced dressed stone string courses. A Seth Thomas clock with dials on all four faces and a 1500 pound bell are installed in the tower. The tower is capped with a pointed spire and a flag staff which rises more than 130 feet above the ground.

The west facade has been symmetrically designed around the tower. The facade is divided horizontally by wide bands of cut stone at the first and second floor levels, and below the cornice line. The cornerstone, which is engraved with the names of the three county commissioners, architect, contractor and superintendent, has been placed in the wide stone bank that separates the foundation from the first story on the north corner. A vertical rhythm has been set up by the projecting end wings which have been further emphasized by the slightly projecting three story wall dormers. The windows are set off by Warrensburg stone lintels and sills. All windows on the second story have transoms while those on the projecting wings and the wall dormers above the cornice line have fanlights set in round-headed arches.

The north and south facades have been similarly designed. The central element on these facades is a slightly projecting three story wall dormer flanked by chimneys which accents the Syrian archway on the first story. This arch repeats the design of the archway on the west facade though access is by a straight side staircase which faces west.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1901

BUILDER/ARCHITECT J. C. HOLLAND

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Mitchell County Courthouse, which was built in 1900-1901, is a fine example of late Richardsonian Romanesque architecture. It represents the mature style of J.C. Holland, a prominent turn-of-the-century Kansas architect. The local post rock limestone extensively used on the exterior not only complements its setting but also demonstrates the high level of local craftsmanship.

Mitchell county was first settled in 1867 and formally organized in 1870. Beloit was selected as the county seat, and T.F. Hersey, one of the proprietors of the Beloit Town Company, reportedly gave the first courthouse building to the county. As the county developed, the 1871 building became too small, and eventually it was also regarded as unsafe. The county acquired a number of other small buildings and rented office space scattered around Beloit. Although this made it very unhandy for those having business with county officers, periodic efforts to secure a new courthouse where all county officers and records could be housed under one roof met with no success.

On March 14, 1900, the old Brunswick Hotel located just to the east of the Beloit commercial district on Block 4 was destroyed by fire. Almost immediately interest developed in using Block 4 as the site for a new county courthouse. The city began negotiating for the various parcels on the block and officially offered to provide the county a site for courthouse construction at no cost. The county commissioners--Slater White, Emanuel Dial and Charles M. Grecian--agreed to put the question of a new courthouse to the voters. On May 29, 1900, a county wide election was held to approve a tax levy for building a \$40,000 courthouse on Block 4 in Beloit. The proposition carried by a 689 vote margin in spite of strong opposition from the community of Glen Elder which had county seat ambitions.

In June, 1900, the county commissioners began interviewing architects, and the city of Beloit hastened to complete the acquisition of all of Block 4. In July the county commissioners toured the new Geary County Courthouse in Junction City which had been designed by architect J.C. Holland of Topeka. They liked what they saw and engaged Holland to prepare the plans. The Mitchell County Courthouse was to be patterned after the one in Geary county.

At their meeting on September 3, 1900, the county commissioners accepted the deed from the city to the courthouse site and also opened bids for construction. The general contract was awarded to Cuthbert and Sargent of Topeka with a low bid of \$33,840. The plumbing and heating contract was awarded to Western Plumbing Co. of St. Joseph, Missouri, for \$2,525. (Because of the firm's difficulties in making bond, the contract was apparently later awarded to the Harrington Supply Co., also of St. Joseph.)

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
COUNTY	
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ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

No. 7 (continuation sheet No. 1)

The east facade has a central wing which projects forward. The windows have been symmetrically arranged around the tall stone chimney which is centered on the facade. All windows are rectangular, while those on the second story have transoms. There is a three story wall dormer set in the corner to either side of the central wing.

Major modern changes to the courthouse include the resurfacing of the hip roof with green asphalt shingles and the remodeling of the interior. A one story building has been constructed close to the east facade visually obstructing much of it.

No. 8

Excavation work began in mid-September and by October 9 the foundation stone was being laid. On October 20 the county commissioners employed A.B. Brookfield to superintend the construction of the courthouse. The winter weather halted masonry work for several months but work began again in March, 1901.

Cornerstone laying ceremonies were held April 4, 1901, with a parade, music and speeches. The governor of Kansas, William Stanley, was the featured guest and gave a short address.

In April A.M. Neuman of Beloit was given the contract to paint the interior. Also, the contract for the metal furnishings was awarded to the Art Metal Construction Company of St. Louis for \$1290.

By May 9 the Beloit Gazette was reporting that the joists for the upper floor were in place, and two weeks later the window frames for the third floor were being installed. In July the roof was put on, and in August the slate was installed. In charge of the carpentry work for Cuthbert and Sargent was Mr. Vansant of Topeka.

M.S. Tidrick of Beloit had the contract for plastering the courthouse and began work August 7. By the end of August most of the stonework was completed; only part of the tower remained, and that was done the first week of September.

November 26, 1901, was the dedication day for the courthouse in conjunction with the annual old settlers day. A large crowd attended to view the parade and hear an afternoon of speeches, which ended with an oration by the Kansas lieutenant governor, James A. Troutman.

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(Continuation Sheet)

ST	
COUNTY	
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(Number all entries)

8. (continuation sheet No. 2)

Apparently all of the county officers were in their new offices by the first of December. The total cost of the building for the county was \$38,310 which was broken down as follows: material and labor, \$33,940; plumbing, \$2,525; architect, \$1,100; superintendent, \$745. The city's cost for the site and filling it to grade was estimated at \$10,000. The city also paid for the Seth Thomas clock which was installed in early 1902.

The building has continued to serve as the center of government for Mitchell county. With its 110-foot tower the structure is reputed to be one of the tallest native stone structures in the state.

9.

"Dedication," Beloit Gazette, November 28, 1901.

Muilenburg, Grade, and Ada Swineford, Land of the Post Rock (Lawrence, Kansas, University Press of Kansas, 1975), p. 127.

"A Trace of Early County History," Glen Elder Sentinel, February 28, 1935.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Beloit Gazette, March 15, 1900--December 19, 1901.




"Courthouse Near 50th Birthday," Beloit Daily Call, October 20, 1951.




10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA




Lat. 39⁰ 27' 31"
Long. 98⁰ 06' 30"

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 2




UTM REFERENCES NOT AVAILABLE

A   
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C   

B   

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

D   

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE	Richard Pankratz, Director, Historic Sites Survey Cornelia Wyma, Architectural Historian
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ORGANIZATION
Kansas State Historical Society

DATE
March 3, 1977

STREET & NUMBER
120 West 10th

TELEPHONE
913 296-3251

CITY OR TOWN
Topeka

STATE
Kansas 66612

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL _____ STATE _____ LOCAL X

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Edgar Langsdorff

TITLE Executive Director, Kansas State Historical Society DATE March 17, 1977

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE _____

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
ATTEST:

DATE _____

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

(MANKATO 1:125,000)

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

98°07'30"
39°30'

22 MI. TO U.S. 36
JEWELL 14 MI.

T. 6 S.
CAWKER CITY 17 MI.
SOLOMON RAPIDS 4.1 MI.

Mitchell County Courthouse
Beloit, Kansas

Lat. 39° 27' 31"
Long. 98° 06' 30"

39°27'31"

27°30"

